



Cape Cod & Islands Commission on the Status of Women

Annual Report

2016

Cape Cod & Islands Commission on the Status of Women~Members

Debbie Bryant, Bourne, Archivist
Susan Cushing, Pocasset
Katia Regina Dacunha, Hyannis
Marie Doubleday, Oak Bluffs: Vice Chair
Penelope Duby, Falmouth: Chair
Tina Games, Harwich
Susan Gardner, Falmouth: Recording Secretary
Laura Innis, Hatchville
Tracy Johnson, Brewster: Corresponding Secretary
Liz Rabideau, West Barnstable
Joan Walsh-Freedman, South Yarmouth: Treasurer
Marie Younger-Blackburn, Mashpee

Emerita Commissioners
Helen Bresnahan, Pocasset
Janet Joakim, Centerville

Purpose:

The Cape Cod and Islands Commission on the Status of Women was enacted by law and established in 2009 to advance women toward full equity in all areas of life and to promote rights and opportunities for all women.

The mission of the Cape Cod and Islands Commission on the Status of Women is to provide a permanent, effective voice for women across Barnstable, Dukes and Nantucket Counties that facilitates and fosters community and inclusiveness among women. The Commission stands for fundamental freedoms, basic human rights and the full enjoyment of life for all women throughout their lives.

The Commission is comprised of thirteen appointed women who have had prior experience working toward the improvement of the status of women. Commissioners are drawn from diverse racial, ethnic, religious, age, sexual orientation, and socio-economic backgrounds from throughout Cape Cod & the Islands. The Commission meets 10 (at least 6) times a year at the members' discretion.

Status:

During 2016, CCICSW adapted to changes both in organization and membership and experienced a rebuilding year in 2016, with a total of ten new commissioners being appointed. Two founding commissioners assumed emerita status. We elected a full slate of officers in October of 2016 and as we gradually added commissioners, we began by reviewing and revising our by-laws, application process and creating an emerita process. We spent considerable time with ethics training and open meeting law familiarization as we actively recruited new commissioners. By January 2017, we had achieved a full complement of 13 commissioners, and currently have only 2 commissioners with more than one year's experience.

Activities:

- Commissioners attended the New England Women's Policy Institute Conference on November 18, 2016
- Commissioners held an Overview of both Massachusetts Advocacy and Legislative Process and the history of Commissions on the Status of Women on February 8, 2017 presented by Lauren Scribi, Executive Director of the Caucus of Women's Legislators and Marydith Truitt, MCSW
- Commissioners attended the MCSW Regional Hearing in Wareham on February 28, 2016
- Presentations about the Commission were made at the Cape Women's Coalition International Women's Day Breakfast March 10, the April meeting of the Cape Cod Women's Business Roundtable and a presentation on advocacy for the Cape Women's Coalition on May 4.
- Commissioners will attend the Investing in Girls Alliance for the 5th Annual Statewide Gathering on Girls on May 12, 2017.

We have agreed that our plan of action will begin in FY 18 and have spent time prioritizing legislation, creating a survey to be conducted across the Cape and Islands and reviewing our procedures. A Retreat was held on March 4 at the Falmouth Public Library led by

Marydith Truitt where we explored ways to implement and support our mission. We established committee structure for:

- Finance: Joan Walsh-Freedman and Liz Rabideau;
- Programs: Tina Games, Laura Innis and Susan Cushing;
- Communications & Public Relations: Tracy Johnson, Debbie Bryant and Janet Joakim;
- Membership: Tina Games, Joan Walsh-Freedman, Katia Dacunha;
- Legislative: Susan Gardner, Helen Bresnahan, Marie Doubleday, and Katia Dacunha and
- Outreach, Penelope Duby, Marie Doubleday and Laura Innis

Committee Actions:

Program Planning Committee, under the guidance of Tina Games is creating a survey to be administered both online and in hard copy across the Cape and Islands. We will reach out to social service agencies, community based nonprofit organizations, religious institutions, senior centers, and women's organizations hoping for a broad distribution of the survey. The results of the survey will be used as a support for planning our outreach, hearings and legislative priorities.

Finance Committee under the direction of Joan Walsh-Freedman is exploring the possibility to partner with another organization in order to create a 'Friends of CCICSW' Platform. A promising meeting was held on May 11 with the aim of creating a fund that could be used to support our mission,

Legislative Committee under the direction of Susan Gardner has reviewed the MCSW Legislative Priorities and we have determined that the commission's choice of legislation of

Priority Legislation for the 2017-2018 General Legislative Session would include:

- S 499 Advancing Contraceptive Coverage and Economic Security in our State (ACCESS)
- S946/H.978 Housing Court Expansion
- S1048 Establishing a Family and Medical Leave Insurance Program
- S785/H2310 End Child Marriage in Massachusetts
- S1000 Establishing Just Schedules for Employees

Supported Legislation for the 2017-2018 General Legislative Session would include:

- S545.H482 Providing for Equitable Coverage in Disability Policies
- S788/HD2873 Protect Girls from Female Genital Mutilation
- S1023/H1048 Establishing a Massachusetts Pregnant Workers Fairness Act

We also identified the immediate opportunity to support legislation for Housing Court Expansion and wrote letters of support for the hearing on April 13, and letters to the President of the House of Representatives, and Chairs of the Joint Judiciary Committees, copied to all Cape & Islands Legislators, all of whom have supported the legislation. Ongoing letters of support and notices of hearings on the above bills will be shared with commissioners.

Community and Public Relations:

Under the leadership of Tracy Johnson, we have developed our ‘elevator speech’ format for our mission, purpose and tasks. We are in the process of reviewing upcoming meeting locations Cape & Island-wide for 2017-2018 in order to make our process available to a broader cross-section of the public. The committee is revising our webpage, and refining our online presence.

Outreach:

Members will attend Advocacy Day on May 17th. Commissioners will collect local contact information to expand our plans to partner with other women’s groups on Cape & Islands to support women’s engagement and disseminate information. So far, we plan to help encourage women to run for office through a program by Cape Cod Women for Change as well as a program on Women’s Economic Empowerment with the Office of the Massachusetts Treasurer planned by SWIFT: Supporting Women in Financial Transition.

Goals:

- To better understand our constituency’s concerns and needs through the survey and hearings.
- To create a mechanism for fundraising to support identified goals.
- To create opportunities to collaborate with other women’s organizations and allies whose work is consistent with our mission across the Cape and Islands.
- To improve our outreach in diverse cultural and linguistic communities
- To promote the mission of the commission and continue creating strong working relationships with legislators.

Submitted: May 11, 2017